

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 CIEP-03 TRSE-00 STR-08 OMB-01

CEA-02 COME-00 DRC-01 IO-14 /161 W
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R 261744Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2541

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UK, EEC

SUBJECT: LABOR PARTY MANEUVERING ON EC ISSUE

1. SUMMARY: WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY THE
IMMINENCE OF A GENERAL ELECTION, PRO- AND ANTI-MARKETEERS
IN THE LABOR PARTY HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR JOCKEYING FOR
POSITION. THE ANTI-MARKETEERS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN PUTTING
THE PARTY ON RECORD IN FAVOR OF HOLDING A SPECIAL
CONFERENCE TO JUDGE THE RESULTS OF RENEGOTIATION.
PRO-MARKETEERS HAVE MANAGED TO AVOID, FOR THE TIME
BEING AT LEAST, COMMITTING THE PARTY EXPLICITLY TO
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HOLDING A REFERENDUM ON THE ISSUE. END SUMMARY

2. ANTI-MARKETEERS SCORED A NOTABLE SUCCESS JULY 24 WHEN THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) OF THE LABOR PARTY VOTED 12 TO 4 TO CALL A SPECIAL TWO-DAY PARTY CONFERENCE AFTER EC RENEGOTIATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED. THE MOTION, MOVED BY TONY BENN, AND APPROVED IN THE ABSENCE OF WILSON, SHORT, CALLAGHAN, AND HEALEY, PROVIDES THAT THIS SPECIAL CONFERENCE SHALL BE FREE TO EXPRESS ITS OWN CONCLUSIONS ABOUT RENEGOTIATION AND TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE ELECTORATE ON WHETHER BRITAIN SHOULD REMAIN IN THE EC

EVER RECOMMENDATION THE CONFERENCE MAY MAKE, ALL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE LABOR PARTY SHALL BE FREE TO SPEAK FOR OR AGAINST CONTINUED EC MEMBERSHIP.

3. A SECOND MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE INTERNAL PARTY MANEUVERING ON THIS ISSUE OCCURRED YESTERDAY (JULY 25), WHEN THE NEC MET JOINTLY WITH THE CABINET TO DISCUSS LABOR'S ELECTION MANIFESTO. THE DRAFT PREPARED BY PARTY HEADQUARTERS WOULD COMMIT THE NEXT LABOR GOVERNMENT TO HOLDING A REFERENDUM (WHEREAS THE LAST ELECTION MANIFESTO MERELY PROMISED TO CONSULT THE BRITISH PEOPLE THROUGH THE BALLOT BOX).

4. ROY JENKINS, LEADER OF THE PRO-MARKET FORCES IN THE PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY, WHO RESIGNED AS DEPUTY LEADER OF THE PARTY IN APRIL 1972 ON THIS VERY ISSUE, REITERATED HIS FUNDAMENTAL OPPOSITION TO THE IDEA OF HOLDING A REFERENDUM. HE WAS SUPPORTED BY SHIRLEY WILLIAMS AND OPPOSED BY TONY BENN. NO DECISION WAS REACHED AND THE QUESTION WAS REFERRED TO A SPECIAL DRAFTING COMMITTEE THAT HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH PREPARING AN ELECTION MANIFESTO BY AUGUST 20.

5. COMMENT: LABOR'S PRO- AND ANTI-MARKETEERS ALIKE ARE ANXIOUS NOT TO REOPEN OLD WOUNDS PRIOR TO THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, LEST THE PUBLIC SQUABBLING DAMAGE THEIR ELECTORAL PROSPECTS. AT THE SAME TIME, BOTH

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CEA-02 DRC-01 COME-00 IO-14 /161 W

----- 003428

R 261744Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2542

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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FACTIONS ARE SEEKING TO MAXIMIZE THEIR ADVANTAGE FOR THE FINAL SHOWDOWN WHENEVER IT COMES. THE ANTI-MARKET-EERS WOULD LIKE TO STAGE A SPECIAL PARTY CONFERENCE ON THE EC ISSUE BECAUSE THEY ARE VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE WOULD GO ON RECORD IN FAVOR OF WITHDRAWING FROM THE EC.

6. WILSON MAY WELL CONSIDER THAT A RECOMMENDATION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER SHOULD BE THE PREROGATIVE OF THE CABINET, BUT IN HIS ROLE AS PARTY LEADER (AS DISTINCT FROM HIS POSITION AS PRIME MINISTER), HE MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RESIST COMPLYING WITH THE NEC'S DEMAND FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A SPECIAL CONFERENCE.

7. SIMILARLY, THE ANTI-MARKETEERS WOULD LIKE TO COMMIT WILSON AS EXPLICITLY AS POSSIBLE TO A REFERENDUM BECAUSE THEY FEEL CONFIDENT THE BRITISH ELECTORATE WOULD VOTE TO LEAVE THE EC. BY PLEADING THE NEED FOR PARTY UNITY (I.E., NOT DRIVING JENKINS AND HIS FOLLOWERS INTO OPEN REVOLT), WILSON MAY SUCCEED IN DELETING SUCH A FIRM COMMITMENT FROM THE ELECTION MANIFESTO, BUT ON PRESENT READING IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW HE CAN AVOID A REFERENDUM AFTER RENEGOTIATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED. THE SHOWDOWN IN THE PARTY WILL THEN COME ON HOW THAT REFERENDUM IS TO BE WORDED AND WHAT RECOMMENDATION, IF ANY, THE CABINET SHOULD MAKE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON09558
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740203-0687
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740715/aaaaamfd.tel
Line Count: 184
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jul-2001 by kellerpr>; APPROVED <14 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR PARTY MANEUVERING ON EC ISSUE
TAGS: PFOR, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005